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**Town of Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission**  
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**Date:** February 4, 2015

**From:** Patrick O'Hara - Chairman, Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission

**To:** State Representative JP Sredzinski

**Re:** Public Hearing Testimony on §8-30g – February 5, 2015  
Board of Alders Chambers, New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Chairman Senator Winfield, Chairman Representative Butler, Vice Chair Senator Osten, Vice Chair Representative Rose, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Representative Kupchick, and esteemed members of the Housing Committee;

Please accept this letter as public testimony for the February 5, 2015 Housing Committee meeting. My duties as Chairman of the Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission prevent me from attending the hearing in person.

The legislature has established §8-30g under the Connecticut General Statutes for the purpose of expanding “affordable” housing stock within every municipality in Connecticut. The Town of Monroe has experienced two approved §8-30g applications that I am aware of. One involving a subdivision of 31 units was built in 2005 and a second subdivision was approved around 2007 but has yet to commence construction.

I look to offer the Committee the following observations:

1. Neither development added substantially to Monroe’s “affordable” stock of housing units as defined under §8-30g. As a matter of fact, the additional houses built along with the affordable units under the Act put Monroe’s compliance further out of reach.
2. Neither development is located in proximity to or with access to mass transit, jobs or needed supporting business services.
3. Both developments include onsite private community septic systems as regulated under Connecticut’s State Public Health Code. The homeowners bear the full cost of maintaining these community systems under their individual Homeowners Association common fees charged monthly. This added expense makes the units less affordable. Further, the 31 unit development built in 2005 has its community septic system alongside the Pequonnock River, an important and sensitive environmental tributary to Long Island Sound.

4. In the 2005 development, the existing homes are currently listing for \$390,000 on average. These units typically include three bedrooms and two bathrooms, the taxes of which average approximately \$9,500 annually, as well as a Homeowners Association fee of \$200.
5. Under the existing Act, the units built in 2005 to help satisfy Monroe's affordable housing stock are already 25% through their deed restricted period as "affordable."
6. Monroe has comparable housing stock priced lower than the units built under §8-30g yet these units are not eligible for consideration under the law. Also, Monroe's 1, 2 and 3 bedroom condominium complexes are located on our State Roads and are readily accessible to businesses and mass transit.

Monroe's housing development has been primarily driven by accessibility and environmental considerations. The Town has no access to sewers and must rely solely upon onsite private septic systems, which are costly and often placed near environmentally sensitive areas. Only recently has limited bus service been added to the Town of Monroe along the business portions of Routes 25 and 111. Even with the recent added bus service, privately owned transportation remains the primary means of accessing jobs, goods and services.

I'll conclude by thanking the Committee for hearing testimony and considering the implications of the existing §8-30g laws on local municipalities. Monroe's experience should show that the existing law, as written, fails to meet the objective of the Legislation. Monroe's existing §8-30g housing is not the most affordable housing in town, is not placed near mass transit, requires costly private sanitary septic systems, exposes our environment to additional risks, and creates housing completely out of character with the underlying zone (and neighborhood area) which loses its "affordable" label 40 years after initial construction.

Perhaps the Law should consider public sewer access, permanent deed restrictions, more units required per project designated as affordable, and give towns like Monroe more consideration for existing stock which meets the goals of §8-30g but lack only the temporary deed restriction designation. Thank you for your consideration and service to the State of Connecticut.

Respectfully,

Patrick O'Hara,  
Chairman – Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission